

WORSBROUGH  
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

*Medical Officer of Health,*

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 1898.

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# **ANNUAL REPORT**

TO THE

**WORSBROUGH URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL,**

**For the Year 1898.**



GENTLEMEN,—The year ending December 31st, 1898, was milder than usual in the winter months, both at the beginning and end of the year, rather warmer in the third quarter, and the rainfall was 5 inches below the average for the preceding 30 years, the deficiency being most marked in the first and third quarters. The result was a high temperature of the subsoil in September, and a consequent exceptional prevalence of Diarrhœa in that month, and of Enteric or Typhoid Fever in the fourth quarter. Fortunately Scarlet Fever and Whooping Cough were less prevalent than usual, and Measles and Influenza not so fatal as in many previous years, so that the general mortality was rather below the average for the preceding seven years (216).

The number of deaths registered in the district was 190, to which have to be added 8 in public institutions outside the district, making 198 in all.

Although about 23 new houses were built during the year, yet in the absence of more definite information, I do not think it would be safe to conclude that there has been any large increase in the population, which in 1897 we estimated at 11,380.

Taking it, then, to have been about 11,400, the death rate per thousand persons living was 17·36, or decidedly lower than the average, in fact a little lower than it was in any of the preceding 22 years—except in 1894,—and a little lower than that of England and Wales generally during 1898, which was 17·6.

The births registered were 410 in number, the smallest number recorded since 1890, except again in 1894, when they were 404. The birth-rate consequently was lower than usual for Worsbrough, having been 35·96 per thousand, which is, however, considerably above the average for England and Wales, which in 1898 was 29·4.

Of the deaths, 110, or 55·55 per cent. were amongst children under 5 years of age, and 79, or 39·89 per cent. were infants, giving an infantile mortality at the rather high rate of 192·68 per thousand births, that for England and Wales having been 161.

The deaths from the seven principal zymotic diseases, including Membranous Croup as a form of Diphtheria, were 28 in number, of which 13 were from Diarrhœa, 10 from Measles, 2 each from Typhoid Fever and Membranous Croup, and 1 from Whooping Cough. This gives a zymotic death-rate

of 2·45 per thousand persons living, somewhat below the average for former years, and nearly half (1·13) of it due to deaths from Diarrhœa. The average for England and Wales was only a little lower, viz., 2·22 per thousand.

I am glad to be able to report a continued decrease in the number of cases of infectious disease notified under the Act, which were 198 in 1896, 45 in 1897, and fell to 37 last year, and of these 15 were cases of erysipelas, leaving only 22 cases of the more serious forms of infectious disease.

Of the cases notified, 11 were cases of Enteric or Typhoid Fever, all but two of them having been subsequent to the middle of September. Of the two notified before that time, one died after a week's illness before the notification was received, and the other when admitted to the hospital did not present the usual symptoms of Typhoid Fever, but was apparently suffering from an allied form of continued Fever, probably caused by exposure to the offensive gases given off from a heap of nightsoil.

The remainder were during the period when Typhoid Fever was seriously prevalent in many Sanitary Districts in South Yorkshire, and were in various parts of the Township—two of them at Birdwell, one at Worsbro' Dale, and the remaining six in the Worsbro' Bridge part of the district, three of these being in one house in Blackburn row, and one of them in a house in Park Road, in which four additional cases have been notified during the present year.



There was, however, no such outbreak as there was in 1893, and with the exceptions mentioned, the cases were scattered, and not specially affecting any particular street or group of houses. Four of the cases were removed to the Kendray Hospital, and one, a child, died a few days after admission. The others, though some of them were very severe cases, all recovered.

There were six cases of Scarlet Fever—two in March, the others in April, July, September, and November. Three of them were in Worsbro' Dale, the others at Worsbro' Bridge and Blacker Hill. Only two were removed to the Hospital. Two others were in a house where there were no children going to school, and in none was there any spread of the disease.

There was only one case of Diphtheria, at Blacker Hill, and two of Membranous Croup, both fatal, at Birdwell, but there has been no prevalence of either disease.

Two cases were notified as Puerperal Fever, one of them in a house where Scarlet Fever had been recently reported, but neither of them proved to have the really serious form of the disease.

Of the 15 cases of Erysipelas, there is nothing of sanitary importance to report.

Of diseases not coming under the Notification Act, Measles was prevalent at Blacker Hill in March; on the 20th of that month, 20 cases were ascertained to exist in the families attending the Board School,

and about 100 children were absent from school on account of that or other illnesses. I recommended the School to be closed for a month, and at the end of that time the epidemic had apparently ceased.

In May, a similar outbreak was reported on Worsbro' Common, and on the 9th of the month I found that 100 children had to be kept away from the Board School on account of Measles. On my recommendation this School was also closed for a month, with a similar result.

There were 10 deaths from this complaint, of which five were on Worsbro' Common, two at Blacker Hill, and three at Worsbro' Bridge. They were all under five years of age.

There was one death from Whooping Cough in Worsbro' Dale, but no proof of any exceptional prevalence of this disease.

Diarrhœa was prevalent in August and September. Of the 13 deaths, nine—and also two of infants from Gastro-enteritis, which probably means Diarrhœa,—were between August 4th and September 28th, when the temperature of the subsoil was at 56° or higher, and two others were during the first week of October.

There was no indication of any one part of the district being more affected than another, but as usual, the greatest mortality was amongst young children, 11 out of 13 being under 5 years of age.

There were three deaths from Influenza in April

and June, and the disease was probably present in a modified form during other parts of the year, especially during the last quarter, when the deaths of young children from acute lung disease rose above the usual number.

The usual systematic inspections of the various parts of the district were made during the year, and some improvements have been made, such as the extension of the water-mains to Kendal Green, and the improvement of the drainage at Excelsior Terrace, Birdwell.

During the year 28 notices were served for the abatement of nuisances, and of these 27 had been complied with at the end of the year, without any legal proceedings having been found needful.

The scavenging has been performed with fair regularity by the Sanitary Staff, but I had to draw your attention in May to the fact that serious nuisance was occasionally caused by offensive night-soil being left during the daytime for too long a period in the close neighbourhood of houses.

There are still too many wet ashpits in several parts of the district, especially at Birdwell, but during the year eight new waste-water closets have been provided.

The progress towards a water-carriage system is not yet very rapid, but possibly may be accelerated when the Midhope Reservoir of the Barnsley Corporation is completed, and a more constant supply of water is obtained for higher parts of the



district, which, rising as they do to a level of 500 ft. above the sea, have too often during the drier parts of the year been imperfectly supplied.

Your sewerage system is fairly complete, and on a satisfactory plan, and as a rule the sink pipes are properly disconnected from the drains leading to the sewers, but in many cases, either from imperfection of the original work, or want of care on the part of the tenants or landlords, the sink-pipes have been broken off close to the houses, and the sewage consequently sinks into the foundations, with evil consequences to health. It is not only necessary that the disconnections should be properly done in the first instance, but constant care is required to keep them right.

Except at Birdwell Common and Swaithe, every arrangement is made for the proper disposal of the sewage on land, in which respect the District compares favourably with its neighbours, though here as elsewhere it is not always found easy to secure a perfectly satisfactory effluent at all seasons.

Your Sanitary Committee is considering the question of the Revision of the Bye-laws, which have not been amended since they were first sanctioned, more than twenty years ago, and require extending in several respects, such as for the regulation of offensive trades, also for the proper surface formation for private streets and yards, which are often much neglected, and perhaps above all for the regulation of Cowsheds, Dairies, and Milkshops.

Much attention has been directed of late to the

great amount of sickness and mortality caused every year by the various forms of Tubercular disease, to which more than 8 per cent. of all the deaths in Worsbrough last year were due. It is now clearly proved that all these diseases are caused by the growth in the body of a special bacillus or germ which must in the first instance have been introduced from the body of some other living being. This bacillus has great tenacity of life, and the power of growing rapidly under favourable circumstances, especially when it finds lodgement in a human body debilitated by the breathing of damp foul air, or by other circumstances depressing to vitality. Fresh air and sunlight, on the contrary, in sufficient quantity are fatal to it, and consequently there has been a marked diminution in the mortality amongst adults of late years, since more attention was paid to sanitary matters, and an improvement secured in the condition of the houses in which the majority of our population have to live.

But there has not been a similar improvement in the mortality amongst children from respiratory and wasting diseases, which are in a large proportion due to tuberculosis, even though the patients may not have presented obvious symptoms of Consumption during life, and there is considerable reason to believe that the great prevalence of this form of disease amongst young children in England is due to infection caused by drinking the milk of tuberculous cows.

It is well known that tuberculosis is very common amongst cows, and that the disease is very apt to

spread in crowded and ill-ventilated cowsheds. The milk from such animals, especially when the udder has become affected, and contains the tubercle bacillus in large quantities, and if taken unboiled or imperfectly cooked, is found rapidly to cause consumption of the bowels in animals or children, especially if weakly or living under unhealthy conditions.

Many of the precautions needful to avoid this danger can only be thoroughly carried out with the aid of additional legislation, but the provision of proper air space and other healthy conditions in cowsheds can be secured by the adoption of proper regulations under the Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops Order, coupled with efficient inspection to see that they are carried out.

It is, I think, time that this was done in the Worsbrough District, which long compared favourably with most of its neighbours in its sanitary provisions, but now-a-days, when sanitary progress is going on all round us, it is needful to keep moving, lest we fall behind in the race.

It is necessary to provide not only a good plant and good regulations, but also to keep them up to modern requirements, and to see that they are properly used and supplied.

The readiness which the Sanitary Authority for Worsbrough has in the past year shown to provide the district under its charge with the armament necessary for diminishing the causes of disease, gives one every reason to believe that it only requires



to be convinced that certain measures are needful and worth the expenditure, great or small, which they necessitate, to induce it to adopt them.

Therefore, I feel it my duty from time to time to bring under your notice those results of scientific enquiry which have a special bearing upon the conditions of health, in the hope that they will be of assistance in your deliberations.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours obediently,

MICHAEL THOMAS SADLER, M.D., Lond.,

Medical Officer of Health.

February 13th, 1899





**[A]****Table of Deaths.**

MORTALITY FROM ALL CAUSES AT SUBJOINED AGES.

At all ages.	Under 1 year.	1 to 5.	5 to 15.	15 to 25.	25 to 65.	65 and upwards
190	79	31	10	10	36	24
Deaths occurring outside the district among persons belonging thereto—						
8	...	1	2	...	1	4

MORTALITY FROM SUBJOINED CAUSES DISTINGUISHING DEATHS OF  
CHILDREN UNDER FIVE YEARS OF AGE.

	Scarlatina	Diphtheria	Membranous Croup	Enteric or Typhoid Fever	Measles.	Whooping Cough	Diarrhoea and Dysentery	Phthisis	Bronchitis, Pneumonia, and Pleurisy	Heart Disease	Influenza.	Injuries	All other Diseases	TOTAL
Under 5	...	...	1	...	10	1	11	3	24	...	...	4	56	110
5 upwds.	...	...	1	2	...	..	2	14	11	16	3	3	28	80

Deaths occurring outside the district among persons belonging thereto—

Under 5 years of age—Enteric or Typhoid Fever 1; 5 years and upwards—  
all other Diseases 7—TOTAL, 8.

*Table of Population, Births, and of New Cases of  
Infectious Sickness, coming to the knowledge of the  
Medical Officer of Health, during the year 1898, in  
the Worsbrough Urban Sanitary District, classified  
according to DISEASES, AGES, and LOCALITIES.*

POPULATION AT ALL AGES.

	Census, 1891.	Estimated to middle of 1898.	Registered Births.
Worsbrough ..	... 9905	... 11400	... 410

<b>[B.]</b>	NEW CASES OF SICKNESS.							REMOVED TO ISO- LATION HOSPITAL. (Kendray Hospital, Ardsley.)	
	Small Pox	Scarlatina	Diphtheria	Membranous Croup.	Enteric or Ty- phoid Fever	Puerperal	Erysipelas	Scarlatina	Enteric or Typhoid.
WORSBROUGH. (Area 3778 Acres.)									
Under 5 Years	...	4	...	1	2	...	3	2	2
5 Years and upwards	...	2	1	1	9	2	12	0	3

Notification Compulsory in District since Nov. 1, 1890.  
Area in Acres, 3,778. Isolation Hospital in Ardsley Urban District.

